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ABSTRACT

A widespread perception exists that faculty with public service or extension activities are not treated equitably either in annual evaluations for merit salary increases or in peer evaluation for promotion. To determine the items considered important in making personnel decisions in extension and service areas, a survey was sent to chief academic officers in 84 land-grant and research universities. Response rate was 73% (from 43 states). Responses concerning importance of activities and measures of effectiveness are discussed. Seventy-eight percent of respondents agreed with the statement "on this campus, some extension faculty allege they have less opportunity for promotion, tenure or salary raises than do instructional/research faculty," but half considered this to be a problem of perception rather than reality. Several steps are suggested to ameliorate this perception, including dissemination of comparative data, discussion of measures of performance, and a clear mutual understanding of expectations. A list of the responding universities is appended. Contains 8 references. (KM)

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Evaluation of Faculty Performance in Extension and Service

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March 22, 1989

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This paper was presented at the Twenty-Ninth Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research held at the Omni Inner Harbor Hotel and the Lord Baltimore Hotel, Baltimore, Maryland, April 30 - May 3, 1989. This paper was reviewed by the AIR Forum Publications Committee and was judged to be of high quality and of interest to others concerned with the research of higher education. It has therefore been selected to be included in the ERIC Collection of Forum Papers.

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Evaluation of Faculty Performance in Extension and Service

Abstract

Faculty members take a personal and professional interest in issues of promotion, award of tenure, and merit salary adjustments. Therefore, with pride, reputation, and financial well-being at stake, charges and counter charges fly over equity or lack of equity in such personnel decisions. A wide-spread perception exists "that public service and extension activities do not receive appropriate attention either in the annual evaluation of faculty for merit adjustment of salaries or in the peer evaluation for promotion in rank." This paper reviews current practices in personnel decisions in the cooperative extension and service areas and presents suggestions on how to approach the negative faculty perceptions. The paper stresses that the overriding criteria for all faculty evaluation are excellence and professionalism.

Evaluation of Faculty Performance in Extension and Service

Second class citizens! Less equality in promotion, tenure, or merit salary raises! These charges are not arising from gender or racial status, but rather over the condition of faculty members with extension or service assignments in a university. (See for example, VPI&SU Self Study, 1986-88, pp. 9-21 to 9-24.) In the majority of the land-grant universities, many extension faculty (in the 1862 Morrill Act Institutions) firmly believe they have less opportunity in such personnel areas as salary decisions, promotion, or continuing appointments than do the instructional or research faculty (Creamer, 1988). Since faculty members take a personal and professional interest in personnel issues, especially those that affect them, charges and counter charges fly over equity or lack of equity. This paper, which reviews current practices in personnel decisions in the cooperative extension and service areas, strives to illuminate issues that are associated with the problem of equity and factors that enter into evaluations. The focus herein is on faculty members in academic departments within academic colleges rather than those in separate units such as extension divisions, county agents, or continuing education offices.

Lynton and Elman (1987) argue that an effective university of the future must expand current practices "to include applied research, technical assistance, and policy analysis" (p.xiii). In short, faculty members must revise their priorities to look beyond the geographic restrictions of a campus (p.3). The authors make a strong argument that service activities will never be considered as serious scholarship and therefore will be less rewarded. Service to them implies serving on a committee or in a civic activity. When a faculty member uses or interprets the technical knowledge from a discipline, for example in technical assistance or policy analysis to a governmental agency, such activity may well be scholarly in nature and in the best tradition of dissemination of knowledge (Lynton and Elman, 147-148). Herein a fundamental issue is to be found and this study supports it: little weight is given on a campus to service activities, yet the closer work approaches a scholarly activity the greater it is valued. The implication therefore emerges that using the title public service raises a negative connotation—regardless of the activity therein encompassed. Lynton and Elman, rather cleverly, refrain from giving a name to the activity they promote other than calling it "new professional activities."

The term public service, it should be noted, means many things: the Cooperative Extension Service, general extension, lifelong learning, community development, continuing education, distance teaching, and other ways to reach the learning society (Mawby, 1987); service also includes work with governmental or corporate organizations, activity within the university, or community-type activity--to include holding public office. Given the varying definitions and calls for public service and the urging of authors such as Lynton and Elman for such emphasis in a university, the issue emerges (which is the thesis of this paper): can ways be found to help ensure equity for faculty who hold extension or service type assignments and who are assigned to departments that have faculty with teaching, research, or service responsibilities?

The lack of awards in extension and public service abound in the literature. Crosson (1983), for example, states,

> The literature provides scant evidence of efforts to examine and devise organizational structures, reward systems, and institutional policies on the allocation of resources and other matters that will enhance the public service mission and provide for the effective delivery of public service. (p. 110)

Hanna (1981) notes that public service activities are "scarcely considered" (p.43) in promotion, tenure, and salary decisions. In a study of off-campus activities for faculty in colleges of education, Seldin (1986) found less reward for off-campus than for on-campus activities. Mezack and Cardot (1988), who surveyed the reward systems in continuing education, a subset of the broader area of this research, found that only 5 percent of the respondents in their study had the term "continuing education" appearing in their official tenure policy. While continuing education instruction carried some weight in faculty evaluations, the respondents who worked in that area thought it carried less weight than it should. A majority of the chief academic officers in land-grant universities (1862) agreed with the statement "on this campus, some extension faculty allege they had less opportunity for promotion, tenure, or salary raises than do instructional/research faculty" (Creamer, 1988). The above citations, while not proving a second-class status for extension and public service, certainly serve as indicators of a wide-spread perception of lack of equality.

One of the problems that helps to perpetrate the perception of inequality is a confusion over definitions. While it would be naive to suggest any solution to this conundrum, the following definitions are used herein:

> Public service: activities "other than" basic research and teaching involving direct professional relationships with groups external to the academic community.

Extension: programs of the cooperative extension service.

University service: internal administrative and committee activities to support the mission of a college or the university. (Based in part on Crosson, p.5.)

Another problem for extension or public service faculty is a lack of numbers, for the number of positions in a department will typically be fewer than positions in teaching and research. Moreover, extension and public service positions will likely be located in one or two colleges with only a few spread across the total university. With few faculty members involved and those concerned typically concentrated in a few areas, promotion, tenure, or merit salary committees at the university level would be more heavily weighted with faculty with teaching or research responsibilities. While such committee members are typically selected for fairness, the lack of information or lack of an advocate for extension or public service faculty could present limitations.

Design of the Survey

In an effort to find the items felt to be important to make personnel decisions in extension and service areas, a survey was sent in July 1988 to chief academic officers in 84 land-grant and research universities. A response rate of 73 percent, with replies from 43 different states, provides an indicator of both responsiveness and interest on the part of these university officers. (See list in Appendix A.)

The survey questionnaire contained two major parts. Respondents who had cooperative extension faculty with appointments in academic departments were asked to complete the first section. In this section, respondents rated nine items of possible consideration in promotion, tenure, and merit salary decisions as very important, somewhat important, or not considered. There were 35, or 57 percent of the respondents, who completed this section of the survey indicating they had cooperative extension faculty in academic departments—these universities were either land-grant institutions or had an agricultural component. An asterisk appears by the name of these institutions in the list of respondents in Appendix A.

In the second part of the survey, all respondents weighed the importance for all faculty members of ten public service activities in decisions on promotion, tenure, and merit salary. The ten items in this section included indicators of university, professional, and community public service. The next sections of this paper review the responses of the academic officers on each part.

Importance of Activities

Respondents weighed different activities potentially related to promotion, tenure, and merit salary decisions. The frequencies and percentages for each of the nine items relating to Cooperative Extension appear in Table 1--the sequence of items mirrors the questionnaire.

Table 1

Activities Typically Used in
Promotion/Tenure/Salary Decisions
Assignments of Extension Faculty
(N = 35)

SCALE: 3 = Very Important; 2 = Somewhat Important; 1 = Not Considered

	RESPONSE							
	NOT CONSIDERED		SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT		VERY IMPORTANT		ALL	MEAN
QUESTION	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	
A. Participate in short courses, conferences	1	2.9	21	61.8	12	35.3	34	2.32
B. Organize a short course, conference, workshop, or similar activity	0	0.0	11	32.4	23	67.6	34	2.68
C. Write or edit numbered extension publications	1	2.9	9	26.5	24	70.6	34	2.68
D. Write books or articles for refereed journals	0	0.0	7	20.6	27	79.4	34	2.79
E. Write a newspaper column, newsletter, or prepare programs for radio or television	0	0.0	24	72.7	9	27.3	33	2.27
F. Undertake research activities (typically applied) related to major field of activity	2	6.3	4	12.5	26	81.3	32	2.75
G. Provide consultation, technical assistance, and applied research to solve problems	1	3.0	5	15.2	27	81.8	33	2.79
H. Develop and implement systems or procedures to provide information to clients, publics, etc.	0	0.0	8	22.9	27	77.1	35	2.79
I. Other major types of activity for extension	1	9.1	1	9.1	9	81.8	11	

It will, perhaps, be no surprise to note that two of the top four items are similar to those required of faculty members in most academic disciplines in research universities—See questions D, F. The ranking by the mean of the responses appears in Table 2.

Table 2

Ranking of Mean Importance of Activities
in the Evaluation of
of Cooperative Extension Faculty
(N = 35)

ITEM	MEAN
Consultation, technical assistance; and applied research	2.79
Write books or articles for refereed journals	2.79
Develop and implement systems or procedures to provide information to clients, publics, etc.	2.79
Research activities (typically applied)	2.75
Organize a short course, conference, workshop, or similar activity	2.68
Write or edit numbered extension publications	2.68
Participate in short courses, conferences	2.32
Newspaper, newsletter, or prepare programs for radio or television	2.27

While not addressed by the questionnaire, it would be reasonable to assume that differences exist among academic departments even within the same university in the weight given to different activities in promotion, tenure, and salary decisions.

Twenty-seven of the 35 respondents wrote comments on an item concerning the appropriate emphasis to be given to special recognitions, awards, and national honors. The majority of those responding thought such recognitions to be important or somewhat important. One respondent observed that such recognition "serves to reaffirm institutional decisions but not to supplant them." When recognitions, awards, and honors were considered, attention was given to the rigor of peer review, to the competitive factor, to activity in a professional area, and to the national stature involved.

Measure of Effectiveness

After each activity listed on the questionnaire, respondents were asked if they knew of measures to determine the effectiveness of work in these areas and, if so, to list them. Respondents

provided 123 measures related to the cooperative extension faculty. Table 3 summarizes the major categories of such measures.

Table 3

Summary of Measures Listed
for Cooperative Extension Faculty
(N = 35)

	Number
Evaluation by peers	30
Evaluation by participants or clients	28
Demand (enrollment, number of requests)	25
Quality measures	17
Number of publications (quantity-type)	14
Other	9
	Total 123

Evaluation by peers and by participants or clients received the heaviest emphasis. Each type of measure is discussed below.

Evaluation by peers. Respondents listed evaluations by peers, department heads, advisory committees, confidential letters from county advisors and project leaders as examples of peer evaluation. These appear to be largely qualitative measures. Assessments by colleagues outside the university seldom received mention in this portion of the survey; on the other hand external peer evaluation attracted frequent mention in the second part of the survey on public service activities.

Evaluation by participants or clients. Although evaluation by participants or clients was the second most frequently mentioned category of responses, responder pically suggested traditional measures of satisfaction, such as the evaluations collected at the conclusion of a course. Two respondents suggested a follow-up evaluation six months after the event.

Demand. The demand for a workshop, class, or service provided another indicator of effectiveness. This category contains almost exclusively quantitative measures. Items here included such measures as demand for a course in terms of number of sites, enrollments at each site, enrollments over time, requests for the activity by new groups, requests for copies of reports or research results, and breadth of distribution of a service both in the home state and in other states.

Quality measures of publications. Quality measures included evaluation of the content of publications for contribution to knowledge, appraisal of its relevance to critical issues, usefulness

of the information, and judgments of the quality or stature of the publication outlet, such as a journal. Since many of these measures might be presumed to be based on peer evaluation, some overlap exists between this category and the first category. Suggestions were not provided about how input from these judgments could be collected and analyzed systematically.

Number of publications. Respondents mentioned the traditional quantitative measure of the number of publications in refereed journals.

The majority of respondents completing the section on the cooperative extension faculty believed that extension faculty should be treated similarly to other faculty in promotion and tenure decisions. A few respondents indicated that the standards for teaching and research should be amended for faculty with major responsibility in extension. The universities surveyed almost always use traditional faculty rank for faculty in academic departments and consequently expect extension faculty to meet the same standards expected from other faculty. The issue, however, is what is meant by meeting the same standards or similar treatment; if such terms mean that extension faculty should be judged on the basis of excellence and professionalism in activity that promotes knowledge, learning, or improvement beyond the classroom, you have one meaning; if the words mean evaluation on the same measures, for example, excellence in publication, then you have a different meaning. The chief academic officers, responding to the questionnaire, report a willingness to consider activities in which extension faculty engage in their evaluations. The problem is that extension faculty do not perceive that this willingness translates throughout the rewards system.

Public Service Activities

The second part of the survey listed service activities that might be considered in promotion, tenure, and merit salary decisions for all faculty members. The frequencies of responses for each of the ten items appear in Table 4.

Table 4

Activities Typically Used in
Promotion/Tenure/Salary Decisions
Service Activities
(N = 61)

SCALE: 3 = Very Important; 2 = Somewhat Important; 1 = Not Considered

QUESTION	RESPONSE: NOT CONSIDERED #	NOT CONSIDERED %	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT #	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT %	VERY IMPORTANT #	VERY IMPORTANT %	ALL #	MEAN
A. Serve on committees for a college or for the university	7	12.1	40	69.0	11	19.0	58	2.07
B. Serve as an elected officer or representative in a major university function , e.g., faculty senate, group to advise the president	7	11.5	39	63.9	15	24.6	61	2.13
C. Professional field - serve on state, regional, or national committees, or hold national office	3	4.9	30	49.2	28	45.9	61	2.41
D. Participate in organization, development of conferences, non-credit courses, workshops, etc. external to university	6	10.2	38	64.4	15	25.4	59	2.15
E. Provide advice, information, or technical assistance to business, government or neighborhood groups	5	8.6	39	67.2	14	24.1	58	2.16
F. Undertake research to help communities formulate plans, policies, and processes to achieve desired outcomes	3	5.1	42	71.2	14	23.7	59	2.19
G. Develop or present cultural, recreational, or special programs aimed at community needs	12	20.7	39	67.2	7	12.1	58	1.91
H. Serve in a public office or on a public service committee	25	43.1	29	50.0	4	6.9	58	1.64
I. Other major types of service activities	4	25.0	10	62.5	2	12.5	16	1.88
J. Teach credit courses as an "OVERLOAD" in night school, off campus, etc.	25	49.0	23	45.1	3	5.9	51	1.57

In addition to the items in Table 4 that came from the questionnaire, respondents added the following as examples of public service activities:

Public service
-serve as a liaison with industry
-advise state or federal legislators or officials on the formulation of policies or regulations

University service
-perform administrative duties for the department
-serve on major committees
-advocate for affirmative action

Professional service.
-participate in national professional activities

Importance of Activities

Table 5 displays the rankings of the mean importance of service activities for all faculty members.

Table 5

Ranking of Mean Importance of Service Activities in the Evaluation of All Faculty (N = 61)

ITEM	MEAN
Professional field — serve on state, regional, or national committees,or hold national office	2.41
Undertake research to help communities formulate plans, policies, and processes to achieve outcomes	2.19
Provide advice, information, technical assistance to business, government or neighborhood groups	2.16
Participate in the organization, development of conferences, non-credit courses, workshops, etc. (external to university)	2.15
Serve as elected officer or representative in a major university function (e.g., faculty senate, etc.)	2.13
Serve on committees for a college or for the university	2.07
Develop or present cultural, recreational, or special programs for community needs	1.91
Other major types of service activity	1.88
Serve in a public office or on a public service committee	1.64
Teach credit courses as an "overload" in night school, off campus, etc.	1.57

The item most likely to receive attention is recognized activity in the professional field of the faculty member. Most community public service activities were rated to be of less importance than uni-

versity public service activities. Institutional service weighs more heavily than community service activities.

Supplementary material sent by respondents reinforced the generally low ranking in importance given to most public service activities, particularly those in the community. These materials usually indicated that recognition was also given for additional university service activities such as serving on student committees, student advising, and working with student organizations. One respondent indicated that affirmative action efforts, both in personnel actions and in target group audiences, were activities given consideration in evaluations. There seems to be virtually no support for the conventional wisdom that institutions with extension faculty give greater weight to public service activities than those without extension faculty.

One cogent observation was that some service activity should be expected from all faculty. In addition, several chief academic officers argued that service activities should be defined as acts that require the training or professional experience and talent of a faculty member.

Measures of Effectiveness

Respondents completing the second part of the survey about the importance of a variety of public service activities in the evaluation of all faculty members listed 122 items as measures to determine effectiveness in these areas. A summary of the major categories of the responses appears in Table 6.

Table 6

Summary of Measures
Listed for ALL Faculty
(N = 61)

	Number
Evaluation by peers	43
Evaluation by participants or clients	25
Quality measures	25
Indications of intensity of participation	21
Demand for service	4
Other	4
	Total 122

As with the responses on measures of effectiveness for the activities of cooperative extension faculty, respondents mentioned evaluation by peers most frequently as an evaluative measure. Input from participants or clients, however, was less likely to be listed as an evaluative measure in service activities. Indications of demand, such as size of enrollments, were cited much less frequently; however, fewer questions in this section related to activities where demand might be an applicable measure.

Some differences appear between the evaluation measures volunteered by respondents for evaluation measures for all faculty and those listed for extension faculty. The category of intensity of participation—really a subset of quality measures—emerged, perhaps a recognition of the frequent listing of measures relating to judgments about the use of professional skills in service activities.

Changes to Current Practices

Concern about extension faculty being considered "second class citizens" or of not receiving equal consideration in evaluation decisions was mirrored by the majority of respondents. As previously noted, of those completing the section on cooperative extension faculty, 78 percent agreed with the statement "on this campus, some extension faculty allege they have less opportunity for promotion, tenure, or salary raises than do instructional/research faculty." Half of the respondents elaborated, however, that this was a problem of perception and not justified by the actual situation.

The issue before chief academic officers is a perception of lack of equality. Several steps could help to ameliorate the perception.

- Disseminate comparative data about the promotion and tenure rates of extension and non-extension faculty. In the process check for statistically significant differences.
- Identify and review the extension and service activities to be performed and at the same time discuss appropriate measures of performance. Share this information with the broader community.
- Make a greater effort to obtain a campus-wide understanding of how extension and service activities differ from the expectations of faculty with research or instructional assignment. Review the different (not lesser) expectations with personnel committees.
- Review with extension and service faculty members their expectations.

- Place the expectations for extension and service faculty in appropriate documents, for example the faculty handbook.
- Redefine how scholarly effort fits into the service and extension.
- Advocate excellence and professionalism in the performance of all faculty.

Conclusion

Several indicators suggest that the topic of the survey touched an area of particular interest. One is the high return rate of 73 percent, which is particularly remarkable when compared to the 20 percent rate Mezack and Cardot (1988) reported for a somewhat similar survey mailed to presidents and chief academic officers at nearly 2,000 public institutions. Another indicator is that respondents wrote in 245 measures of effectiveness.

The questionnaire did not mention international activity for recognition. The respondents also failed to make mention of the area—undoubtedly a place for more emphasis in the future.

The term public service seems to be used quite generically in the respondents' comments. This observation confirms the findings of others in the field, for example, Mawby or Lynton and Elman. Some use the term interchangeably with continuing education. Few respondents sent supplementary material that clearly distinguish between the different types of service activities or the weights given to the different types of service activities in promotion and tenure decisions. Given the wide differences in the weight different types of service activities receive in promotion, tenure, and merit salary decisions and the general lack of precision in the terms used to describe public service activities, it would seem that the recommendation by many respondents that more definition is needed for the criteria used in the evaluation of service efforts is well grounded—cooperative extension also needs better definition. Respondents, therefore, indicate that definitions are needed, and that the activities and measures considered in evaluation should be reduced to writing. Any effort to clarify the relationship between the term service and the scholarly activity that faculty pursue would appear a useful step.

Determination of effective measures of productivity or performance is no less a complex task for extension and service than it is for teaching. In fact, it may be more difficult for activities are less well known or understood. Personnel decisions will not reduce easily to a formula and strictly quantitative measures will not work for extension and service evaluation any more than they work

for research or for teaching. Findings from the survey, however, provide a list of activities that may be considered in evaluations, as well as measures that can be used to determine the effectiveness of cooperative extension and public service activity undertakings. Some of these measures, such as peer or participant evaluations, suggest who to collect the information from, and others, such as quality measures, are what to examine. Many questions are left unanswered about the most effective and efficient way to collect information from peers, and how to assure that the method used to collect this information is valid and reliable.

The respondents report that efforts are made to have extension and service activities considered in promotion, tenure, merit salary reviews. The perception that extension and public service activities make a second-class citizen is widely held—although respondents quickly add their observation that in reality the treatment is equitable. The tables of this report provide ideas on what is used and how it is used to assess faculty with cooperative extension and service activities.

Hanna (1981), Seldin (1986), and Mezack and Cardot (1988) all have commented on the lack of reward for public service activity; this study certainly reinforces the fact that such a perception exists. Chief academic officers usually observe, however, that the perception is not valid, and their responses to this survey indicate an understanding of the different requirements for extension and service. The extension and service faculty, however, need to be vigilant that faculty handbooks, promotion committees, and other administrators recognize a difference in activities. If, as Lynton and Elman (1987) contend, universities must expand activities in "applied research, technical assistance, and policy analysis," much more preparatory work is needed on university campuses to ensure equality in treatment for faculty thus engaged. Perhaps the key factor is to explain throughout a university community that different activities may legitimately comprise the assignment of a faculty member, but that excellence and professionalism in whatever the activity serve as the basis for recognition.

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Appendix A

List of Universities Who Responded
July 1988

* Auburn University
University of Alabama
* University of Alaska
Arizona State University
* University of Arizona
* University of Arkansas
University of California-Berkeley
* University of California-Davis
University of California-Irvine
University of California-Los Angeles
University of California-Santa Barbara
University of Southern California
* Colorado State University
Florida State University
* University of Florida
* University of Georgia
* University of Idaho
* University of Illinois
Indiana University - Bloomington
* Iowa State University
* University of Kentucky
Louisiana State University System
and Agricultural and Mechanical
College
* University of Maine
* University of Maryland
University of Massachusetts
* Mississippi State University
University of Mississippi
University of Missouri
* University of Nevada-Reno
* University of New Hampshire
* Rutgers, The State University
* New Mexico State University
* Cornell University
State University of New York at Albany
State University of New York at Stony Brook
* North Carolina State University
North Dakota State University
* Ohio State University
* Oklahoma State University
* Oregon State University
University of Oregon
Lehigh University
* Pennsylvania State University
University of Pittsburgh
* University of Rhode Island
* Clemson University
University of South Carolina
University of South Dakota
* University of Tennessee
Texas A&M University
Texas Tech University
University of Utah
* Utah State University
* University of Vermont
University of Virginia
Virginia Commonwealth University
University of Washington
* Washington State University
* West Virginia University
* University of Wisconsin-Madison
* University of Wyoming

*Respondents completing section on Cooperative Extension Faculty.